



# Operational Guideline – Planning and Assessment – Supports in the Plan – Recreation Supports

## Legislation

1. Read s.4 and s.34 of the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#) (NDIS Act) and the [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(Support for Participants\) Rules 2013](#) (Supports for Participants Rule).

## General principles

2. People with disability have the same rights as other members of Australian society to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

See s.4(1) of the [NDIS Act](#)

3. People with disability should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability.

See s.4(2) of the [NDIS Act](#)

4. Positive personal and social development of people with disability, including children and young people, is to be promoted.

See s.4(16) of the [NDIS Act](#)

5. Reasonable and necessary supports for people with disability should:

- a. Support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise their independence, and
- b. Support people with disability to live independently and to be included in the community as fully participating citizens, and
- c. Develop and support the capacity of people with disability to undertake activities that enable them to participate in the mainstream community and in employment.

See s.4(11) of the [NDIS Act](#)

6. The preparation, review and replacement of a participant's plan should so far as reasonably practical be individualised; directed by the participant; where relevant consider family, carers and significant others; consider availability of informal support, access to mainstream and community supports; and build individual capacity to increase participation and inclusion in community with the aim of achieving individual aspirations.

See s.31 of the [NDIS Act](#)

7. Plans should maximise choice and independence of the participant and facilitate tailored and flexible responses to individual goals and needs.

See s.31 of the [NDIS Act](#)

8. The *statement of participant supports* specifies the general supports (if any) and the reasonable and necessary supports (if any) that will be funded. In deciding whether to approve a statement the delegate must:
  - a. Have regard to the legislation and rules, participant statement, relevant assessments,
  - b. Be satisfied that all clauses of s.34 of the [NDIS Act](#) on reasonable and necessary are met including that the support is most appropriately funded by the NDIS and offers value for money,
  - c. Have regard to the principle that a participant should manage their plan to the extent they wish and the operation and effectiveness of any previous plans of the participant.

See ss.33, 34 and 35 of the [NDIS Act](#)

## Recreation supports

9. Recreation (including sport) is any activity, pastime or hobby that is carried out for enjoyment or leisure. Recreation does not usually generate a substantial, if any, income.
10. Recreation can offer opportunities for social inclusion and participation, as well as the associated benefits of improved health and well-being, improved skills and capabilities, heightened self-esteem and enhanced enjoyment of life for both the person and their support network.
11. This operational guideline provides guidance to delegates in considering the inclusion of reasonable and necessary recreation supports in a plan such as:
  - a. Specialised sporting equipment or modification of equipment,
  - b. Personal assistance to participate in recreation activities such as changing into sports clothes, manipulating equipment, positioning to undertake the activities,
  - c. Assistance to travel to a recreation event in which the participant is engaged, where it is not reasonably expected that the family or community would provide the transport and where the participant is not able to independently use public transport,
  - d. Assistance for organisations to adjust to the specific needs of their member who is a NDIS participant where that adjustment is not part of their universal obligations under reasonable adjustment (for example, training for a team captain to assist his or her football team to adjust to the needs of a team member who has an intellectual impairment).
12. Supports for recreation that are aids and equipment would generally only be funded at a level that allows independence at an entry level to the activity and are not intended to facilitate participation in representative competitions (e.g. competing in State or National Championships), nor professional level involvement (e.g. competitions with significant prize money or performance contracts)

## Reasonable and necessary supports

13. Before specifying any general support, or reasonable and necessary support, in a participant's plan the delegate has to:
  - a. Be satisfied that all the criteria set out in s.34(1) of the [NDIS Act](#) are met in respect of each funded support before it is included in a participant's plan;
  - b. Ensure the support:
    - i. will not cause harm to the participant or pose risk to others,

- ii. is due to the effect of the disability on the participant and does not duplicate supports available from other systems,
- iii. does not relate to day to day living costs (e.g. rent, groceries, utility fees) unless directly attributable to the impact of the disability on the participant, and
- iv. is not illegal or consist of income replacement

See *Operational Guideline – Planning and Assessment – Supports in the Plan*  
See rs.5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the [NDIS \(Supports for Participants\) Rules 2013](#)

- c. Consider the additional guidance for delegates provided by the National Disability Insurance Agency (the NDIA) set out in this operational guideline in relation to sport and recreation supports.

14. This operational guideline lists the matters that delegates are to consider under headings which refer to the paragraphs of s.34(1). For example, value for money (s.34(1)(a)) and effective and beneficial having regard to current good practice (s.34(1)(b)). Delegates are to note that the matters to be considered may fall across more than one paragraph of s.34(1) and need to be considered in relation to more than one paragraph of s.34(1).

## Goals and aspirations

15. Supports in the plan must relate to the goals and aspirations identified by the participant, however in relation to recreational support, it is important that the recreation relate to a participatory goal – that is, recreation would not be a goal of itself but would be related to developing greater social networks or greater inclusion in the community.

See s.34(1)(a) of the [NDIS Act](#)

## Supports that will not be funded or provided by the NDIS

16. The rules provide that a support will not be funded by the NDIS if it;
- a. Is likely to cause harm to the participant or pose a risk to others, or
  - b. Is not related to the participant's disability, or
  - c. Duplicates other supports delivered under alternative funding through the NDIS or other systems, or
  - d. Relates to day-to-day living costs

See r.5.1 of the [Supports for Participants Rules](#)

17. Recreation activities have costs associated that are usual for all Australians, for example club registration fees or attending local sporting events and these are normally funded from a person's disposable income. It is critical that delegates consider whether the need for the support arises as a result of the impact of the participant's disability rather than being an expense that any Australian would usually fund from their income.
18. If a participant requires modifications to the usual equipment required to participate in their chosen recreation, the NDIS may fund the reasonable and necessary additional costs associated with equipment (over and above the usual cost for the equipment) or the cost of modifying the equipment. If a participant who engages in recreational horse riding required a modified saddle as a result of their disability the additional cost of that saddle (if any) may be an appropriate support for

the NDIS to fund. Note that only the additional expense would be funded (that is, the reasonable cost of the modified saddle minus the cost of a non-modified saddle, or the reasonable cost of modifications to a saddle purchased by the participant).

19. If necessary to make progress with the participant's goals, they need specialised equipment as a result of their disability in order to participate in their chosen recreation, and that equipment is not required by a person without a disability to participate in the recreation, the NDIS may fund the reasonable cost of the specialised equipment, for example an entry level sports wheel chair. The delegate must take into account all elements of s.34 of the [NDIS Act](#) in determining whether the support is both reasonable and necessary.

## Support most appropriately funded by the NDIS

20. The [NDIS Act](#) requires that a delegate must be satisfied that a support is most appropriately funded or provided through the NDIS and not more appropriately funded or provided through other service systems

See s.34(1)(f) of the [NDIS Act](#)

21. State and Territory Departments of Sport and Recreation (SDSR) or their equivalent, provide the key connection between sports organisations and the disability sector. SDSRs have staff and resources to help develop pathways for people with disability to get involved in sport. This is achieved by creating and developing relationships between sports organisations and disability organisations, such as disability service providers. This work is coordinated by SDSR staff in most states and territories other than Queensland where the work is coordinated by the Queensland Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association.

See [Ausport website](#)

22. The NDIS would consider that the following supports would often be more appropriately funded or provided through other general systems of service delivery:
  - a. Those available generally and to the public (for example, the Companion Card which provides entry for a companion to movies, football etc.),
  - b. Those available and funded for the public in the community e.g. club programs to support a new member,
  - c. Community transport for recreational activities,
  - d. Those made as part of an organisation's obligations under reasonable adjustment e.g. a ramp to the clubhouse,
  - e. A person's or organisation's capital costs, e.g. equipment and vehicle purchases.

## Social and economic participation

23. Before including a support in a plan, the delegate must be satisfied that the support will assist the participant to undertake activities, so as to facilitate the participant's social and economic participation. Delegates should be aware that not all recreational activities lead to participation and should ensure that supports are linked back to participatory goals. For example, recreation that involves no social interaction has no prospect of leading to economic participation is unlikely to facilitate the participant's social and economic participation.
24. Delegates should also consider whether other supports in the plan can be arranged in a way that provide recreation in addition to the other purposes of the supports.

See s. 34(1)(b) of the [NDIS Act](#)

## Value for money

25. Before a support is added to a plan the delegate must be satisfied that it represents value for money in that the costs of the support are reasonable and necessary to make progress on goals relative to both the benefits achieved and the cost of alternative support.

See s.34(1)(c) of the [NDIS Act](#)

26. Delegates need to consider value for money noting that this applies to the support being provided or funded specifically rather than the recreational activity itself. The participant will choose their own recreational activities and the assessment of value for money is done in that context.

## Effective and beneficial

27. Before including a support in a plan the decision maker must be satisfied that the support will be, or is likely to be, effective and beneficial for the participant, having regard to current good practice. Wherever possible, supports for recreation should be provided in a way that is time-limited and focussed on building capacity for the participant to take part in activities independently.

See s.34(1)(d) of the [NDIS Act](#)

## Reasonable expectation of families

28. Delegates must take into account what is reasonable to expect of families and carers of participants. The NDIS would generally not fund supports where that might be reasonably be expected to be provided by the participant's family and friends or community members (e.g. parents sharing a roster to transport children to sport).

See r.3.4 of the [Supports for Participants Rules](#) and s.34(1)(e) of the [NDIS Act](#) and *Operational Guideline – Planning and Assessment – Supports in the Plan*

## Expectations as to levels of support required

29. Where inclusion of recreational support in a plan is considered reasonable and necessary to progress goals, the level of support will take into account principles of reasonable accommodation and be in line with the principle that people with disability have the same rights as other members of Australian society to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Delegates are to actively explore the use of the Local Area Coordination team to increase community and recreation outcomes in a cost effective manner leading to greater independent participation.
30. Supports for access to community, social and recreational activities can be in addition to employment support, vocational training and full time programs of weekday support for adults. Support will be limited to one of three levels:
- Level 1 – maximum of 3 hours per week in addition to full time day program attendance or full time employment or study,
  - Level 2 – maximum 6 hours per week where the participant undertakes part time employment or day program, or
  - Level 3 – an equivalent of 4 hours per week for 3 months where included as capacity building activity with a view of integrating into mainstream or existing community activities. This can be in addition to either of levels 1 or 2 above for the defined period but will not be provided more than once per year.

31. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the delegate to include a higher level of support such as where:
  - a. A person is showing promise for competition in Paralympic sports or Special Olympics and additional support is required to enable the person to undertake the necessary training regime in addition to their usual work or study, or
  - b. A person with particular talents in the arts is required to attend a study school for a defined period to further develop their talents which would result in greater participation in the longer term.
32. Support of up to \$500 to pay for the activity costs may be funded for participants 16 years and older to enable people to continue connection and engagement or participate in a new activity. The amount of funding up to \$500 will depend on the cost of the activity that will achieve the participant's goal. For participants under the age of 16 these costs are regarded as a parental responsibility.

## General supports

33. Local Area Coordinators will have a key role in assisting participants to identify opportunities within the community to access community and recreational supports. A Local Area Coordinator can assist the participant to work with relevant organisations to ensure the recreational or sporting activity becomes more accessible and attractive to persons with a disability.